



National Motor Vehicle
Theft Reduction Council
driving down vehicle theft

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The NMVTRC is an initiative of all Australian Governments and the Insurance Industry

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CARS
comprehensive auto-theft research system

theft watch

September brings steep decline

A considerable decline in passenger/light commercial (PLC) and motorcycle thefts has resulted in the September quarter delivering the strongest quarterly reduction since this time last year. Overall there were 904 fewer PLC thefts, a significant decrease of 6 per cent from the June 2008 quarter. Nationally, another 6 per cent decrease has brought PLC thefts to an all time low of 56,298 for the rolling 12 month period.

All states contributed to the fall this quarter, with the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory the only jurisdictions to experience a slight rise, amounting to an additional 160 thefts¹. Victoria produced the nation's outstanding performance, with a substantial reduction of 465 thefts. Full year performances were split; while New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania experienced strong reductions of between 8 and 21 per cent, thefts increased between 0.7 and 8 per cent in the remaining jurisdictions.

The PLC recovery rate remained stable for both the quarter and the year at 68 per cent and 74 per cent respectively. The total value of PLC vehicles also remained constant at \$125 million, and the value of unrecovered PLCs rose to a total of \$44 million, up \$2 million from the previous quarter.

September also delivered the largest quarterly reduction in motorcycle theft to date of 19 per cent. However, the rolling 12 month figure continues to represent the upward trend with a 15 per cent increase. Recoveries remained low at 35 per cent.

1. Small jurisdictions are often subject to large fluctuations up and down due to the relatively low baselines.
Passenger and light commercial (PLC) vehicles accounted for 83 per cent of total thefts. Values calculated using the resources of Glass's Information Services.

* Excluding claims with \$0 cost. There were 301 claims with a cost equal to zero.

Table 1: Australia, theft snapshot, PLCs

12 months to September 2008	
Number of thefts	56,298
% change from previous 12 months	-6.2
% of thefts recovered in year	74.8
September 2008 quarter	
Number of thefts	13,123
% change from last quarter	-6.4
% change from same quarter previous year	-7.3
% of thefts recovered in quarter	68.7
Theft rate per 1,000 population	0.62
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations	0.94
Total value of stolen PLC vehicles [#]	\$125m
Total value of unrecovered PLC vehicles	\$44m
Number of claims*	6,538
Average claim cost (\$)*	9,964
Median claim cost (\$)*	5,504
Total sum of claims	\$65m

Top short term use targets, September quarter

	Number stolen
Holden Commodore	
VN, VL, VT, VS, VP, VR, VX, VK, VY	1,978
Ford Falcon EA, XF, BA, AU, EF	631
Ford Laser KE, KC, KF	346
Toyota Camry SV21, SV22	274
Hyundai Excel X3	234

Top profit-motivated theft targets (aged less than 10 years), September quarter

	Number unrecovered
Holden Commodore VX, VT, VY, VZ, VE	164
Ford Falcon BA, AU	78
Totota Corolla ZZE122R	25
Ford Falcon Ute BA	23
Holden Astra TS	21

Figure 1: Passenger/light commercial vehicles stolen and not recovered by quarter, January 2000 – September 2008

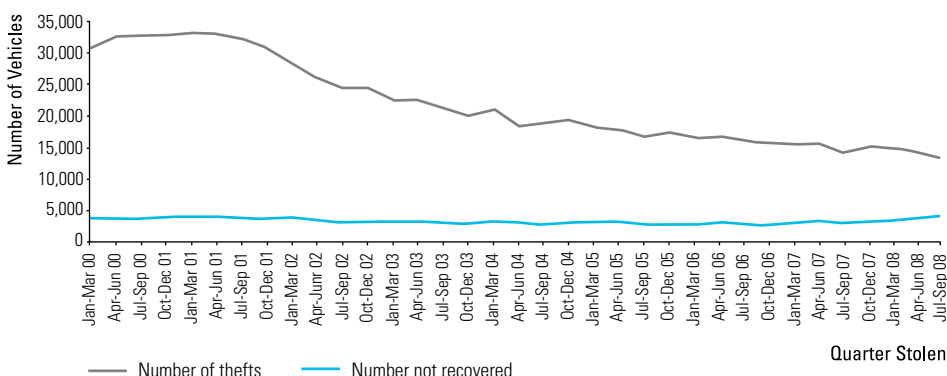


Table 2: Australia, thefts and recoveries by vehicle type, July – September 2008

Vehicle type	Number of thefts	Number not recovered	% Recovered
Pasenger/light commercial	13,123	4,109	68.7
Motorcycles	1,730	1,217	29.7
Heavy/other vehicles/unknown	897	378	57.9
Total	15,750	5,704	63.8

Table 3: Australia, state and territory breakdown, PLCs

	Number of thefts, September quarter	Change in theft numbers from last quarter	Number of thefts not recovered in the quarter	% of thefts recovered in the quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 population, September quarter	Theft rate per 1,000 registrations, September quarter	Thefts for 12 months to September 2008	Change in theft numbers from last 12 months
ACT	454	136	143	68.5	1.32	2.04	1,741	137
NSW	4,860	-341	1,868	61.6	0.70	1.22	21,049	-1,822
NT	192	24	38	80.2	0.88	1.77	707	63
QLD	1,708	-76	443	74.1	0.40	0.57	7,196	-742
SA	1,355	-19	318	76.5	0.85	1.24	5,447	-1,478
TAS	302	-60	31	89.7	0.61	0.80	1,270	-161
VIC	3,040	-465	943	69.0	0.58	0.83	13,500	100
WA	1,212	-103	325	73.2	0.56	0.80	5,388	151
Australia	13,123	-904	4,109	68.7	0.62	0.94	56,298	-3,752

Table 4: Australia, theft snapshot, motorcycles

September 2008 quarter		12 months to September 2008	
Number of thefts	1,730	Number of thefts	7,753
% change from last quarter	-19.2	% change from previous 12 months	15
% change from same quarter previous year	-0.3	% of thefts recovered in year	35
% of thefts recovered in quarter	29.7		
Theft rate per 1,000 registrations*	2.89		

* Must be regarded with caution as a large and unknown proportion of motorbikes are not registered.

Economic instability delivers unexpected benefit

We have previously reported that one of the five major factors propelling the escalation in the proportion of unrecovered vehicles was the elevated precious metals market. The market saw the value of scrapped vehicles reach up to \$300 per tonne mid-year, making it a very lucrative business for car thieves.

The current economic climate is certainly an issue for property crime generally. In the NMVTRC's 2008 Strategic Plan published in September we noted the instability of the

current economy and the potential impacts of a recession on vehicle crime. The nexus between periods of good economic performance and lower rates of property crime could mean that with adverse changes in the nation's economy there is a significant risk that recent reductions in vehicle crime will stall or actually reverse. In addition the falling value of the Australian dollar is likely to push up the cost of legitimate replacement parts for imported vehicles and further fuel the parallel illicit parts market.

Ironically, however, the collapse of the processed metals market has seen the price for scrapped vehicles plunge to just \$10 per tonne by mid-November in Melbourne.

We expect that this dramatic drop will directly influence theft figures, seeing a reduction in the number of older, unrecovered vehicles and an overall rise in the number of recovered vehicles in the December quarter and into early next year. The overall impact of the current economic climate on vehicle crime will continue to be closely monitored over the coming months.

The CARS 2007/08 annual statistical data CD is now available. The CD presents an overview of national trends and detailed profiles for each state and territory and allows simple navigation of the most comprehensive statistics (temporal, vehicle type, geographical and insurance). For a copy of the CD please email ncars@ncars.on.net

Also, a reminder that stakeholders are able to conduct self searches on a range of vehicle theft statistics using the CARS Analyser. To access the Analyser go to <http://ncars.on.net/analyse.asp>

We encourage and value all feedback on our publications. *Theft Watch* is a statistical based newsletter. If there is any way that we can improve the publication to meet your needs please let us know by emailing info@carsafe.com.au